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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0510

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RULGPSU/COMSOCOMSOUTH IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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RUMIAAA/USOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 000811

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL HO

SUBJECT: TFH01: MEDIA REACTION OAS FOREIGN MINISTERS VISIT

"Foreign Ministers visit."

¶1. (U) Editorial in the San Pedro Sula-based conservative paper La Prensa (8-24-09): "The arrival... of seven Hispanic-American foreign Ministers is announced for today; perhaps they will listen and later ponder on the situation as the Inter-American Human Rights Commission did that stuck to an agenda and a script previously elaborated. The OAS Commission is composed of the Foreign Ministers of Canada, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Argentina. Argentina has repeatedly stated its position and with disregard has ordered the expulsion of the Honduran Ambassador in Buenos Aires; they cannot contribute something to solving the Honduran problem. However, they come to the country as a token and in recognition that the first decision, the impulsive initiative that led to the condemnation, and the call for the unconditional return of the former President, was a serious mistake of the hemispheric organization, which is now trying with diplomatic effort to find a solution. Let's not give up hope, because in the meantime, while the ministers travel to our country, some of their governments are applying measures and demand to increase the pressure on the weakening of the Government through punishment to the people, -- to Hondurans in the countries where their ambassadors were expelled. Little can be expected from the OAS ministers, but the need for dialogue, rapprochement and understanding is so big that we have hope that in the end it might lead their governments to the earlier history -- of before, during and after June 28. Thus we have no doubt, more spaces will be open to understand in all its dimensions, the consequences of the authoritarianism toward which Honduras was being led, and from their acceptance, find solutions that should go well beyond academic democracy to impact fully on the social reality which is the greatest threat to the strengthening of the system of freedoms."

"Urgent need to negotiate with OAS."

¶2. (U) Op-ed by Otto Martin Wolf in La Prensa (8-24-09): "I think it is time for Honduras to start to negotiate its return to the OAS. It is true that we have been treated badly; we were suspended without being heard. Unlike any court where the accused has the right to defend themselves and that they are only condemned after being found guilty, we were executed without them even hearing us. Honduras, 'the small country that could', should demand first before its re-entry to the OAS, the release of all political prisoners and free elections to be held in Cuba, as well as allowing the return to that country all exiles and their descendants, that for 50 years have fled (the island) in search of freedom. In Venezuela, all television and radio stations closed or confiscated by the State

should be reopened. Also request that the President of Argentina renounce her position, since it is proven that her campaign was funded by Chavez. Correa and Ecuador should also resign in shame because their campaigns received money from FARC, whose funds come from abductions, trafficking and extortion. These conditions would ensure fair and legal treatment in the OAS to Honduras and - also-- bring freedom to several Latin American countries suffering under the weight of immoral dictatorships. It is true that we do not have much to win by re-entering the OAS, at least not based on the discredit that its members and authorities allowed to occur (starting with its Secretary General), but I am sure that the people of the countries which I mentioned would benefit much if they accept our conditions. If these conditions are not accepted, all of them can be changed for the only condition to respect the right that the people have to elect-- and remove-- its presidents and that nobody should interfere in that right, not the OAS, nor another country. To respect the right Honduras has to choose - and remove - its authorities, with attachment to law, but above all with the right of the people to be free and not have imposed dictatorships disguised as democracy and wrapped in the dark cloak of lies, demagoguery and populism."

"Useless dialogue."

3.(U)Op-ed by Billy Pena in the San Pedro Sula-based liberal paper Tiempo (8-24-09): "With today's arrival of the ministers of the OAS accompanied by Dr. Jose Miguel Insulza a milestone is marked in this sad drama developed in Honduras. Nobody knows - accurately - what is happening and every day contradictory criteria arises. The only thing we know for sure is that the people are violent and strikingly divided and that human rights have been violated. The de facto government rejects the visit of the Secretary General. He is being

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accused of serving Hugo Chavez. Also it is being said that he is not Honduras' friend because he lacks impartiality; however, we recently accused the entire world of being against us. Dr. Insulza in his capacity as Secretary General of the Organization of American States has a mission to fulfill and it is to accompany the ministers to Honduras for the purpose of seeking a negotiated solution to the political crisis that succeeded in dividing the Honduran people. Honduras is a high-risk country. In addition, we do not understand why we rejected so vehemently the Secretary General; is it because he does not recognize the current government as legitimate? Then we should reject the Secretary General of the United Nations and all governments that have isolated us. The situation is serious, sensitive, and critical and -- if you want -- desperate. Unfortunately, (we have) not thought ahead about the negative consequences that will arise due to isolation in which we find ourselves. The biggest nonsense is that we say we want to live in democracy. What democracy? We have never known democracy in this country that has been governed by military, by a dictator who stayed almost 20 years in power; meanwhile at the beginning of the eighties another President turned Honduras into an aircraft carrier for the United States. We cannot talk of democracy when we have never known it. We have been so naive that we believed that democracy is to go to vote every four years. That is not democracy. Because of our immaturity and bad reasoning we believe that the OAS, the United Nations and all countries are against us. We are already in problems with Argentina and Venezuela, other than believing - childishly -- that the Costa Rican President Oscar Arias did not draft the San Jose Declaration on our behalf since the first point of that document requested the return of President Manuel Zelaya. That is what all countries and international organizations are looking for. They don't do it to become supporters of President Zelaya but because they want to restore the constitutional order which was violently interrupted on June 28. That is the purpose of the visit of the Organization of American States, the Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza. They all want a diplomatic, brainy and peaceful solution to the circus show that we are offering to the world; however, the de facto government does not accept. We do not believe that the visit of the delegation will yield positive results. They will arrive to dialogue and to waste time... everything will be useless."

"Smoke."

¶4. (U) Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based liberal paper La Tribuna (8-24-09): "An OAS mission integrated by seven foreign ministers will come on Monday to Honduras in search of a negotiated way out, under the San Jose mediation, to the political crisis. Going back to this first mission that comes from the OAS, there are many hopes and expectations to help restore peace to the nation. The Inter-American Democratic Letter reads that in case a State Member has an alteration of the constitutional order seriously affecting its democratic order, the permanent Council, according to the situation, may order the necessary diplomatic efforts to promote the normalization of democratic institutionalism. And also adds that when the General Assembly, convened to an extraordinary session, finds that there has been a rupture to the democratic order in a State Member and that the diplomatic efforts have been unsuccessful, according to the Letter the OAS will make the decision to suspend that State Member of their right to participation in the OAS. Perhaps the mission, apart from awareness lobbies on the San Jose mediation, could clarify on what diplomatic intervention, and what good efforts the OAS undertook, before suspending Honduras, as mandated in the Inter-American Democratic Charter? In everything let's pray to God there will be positive results."

"Can we trust the OAS commission?"

¶5. (U) Op-ed by Oscar Antonio Oyuela in La Tribuna (8-24-09): "Before the failure of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, by not dealing seriously with the case of Honduras and ignoring the research procedures established in the OAS Letter to settle disputes, the U.S. State Department chose to accept the good work of the Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, to mediate between the parties in conflict. Meanwhile there are internal and international discussions on the issue; there have been questions regarding the Inter-American system, which according to some international analysts, requires prompt intervention before it collapses completely to the detriment of emerging democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Others, however, consider that an

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evil (motive) is within those targeting hemispherical organizations and for that, the same States are responsible. The OAS Secretary General has received strong criticism from distinguished personalities of the political and diplomatic world of the U.S. and Latin America; for example, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Roger Noriega, who leads the list of Chavez' enemies, by saying that the OAS is closest to those who least value democracy. We ask ourselves if we can trust this special commission announced by Insulza that will arrive in Tegucigalpa to reestablish the country's constitutionality. Who is part of the Ministerial Committee? What mechanisms did Mr. Insulza use for selecting members of that Committee? Is it a Commission of good faith or one prefabricated to make Honduras do what we Hondurans do not want?"

Henshaw